



Massachusetts Tree Wardens' & Foresters' Association

Since 1913, Working for the Protection and Preservation of Trees

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

January 7, 2026

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Marc Welch, City of Newton, MA, Recognized as Tree Warden of the Year



Marc Welch with his wife and sons

Sturbridge, MA— The Massachusetts Tree Wardens' and Foresters' Association (MTWFA) is proud to announce that **Marc Welch** has been named the **2026 Massachusetts Tree Warden of the Year**, receiving the prestigious Seth H. "Swifty" Swift Award during the Association's annual conference.

The Tree Warden of the Year Award recognizes an individual who exemplifies exceptional leadership, dedication, and commitment to the protection and stewardship of urban trees. The award is named in memory of Seth "Swifty" Swift, longtime MTWFA member, past president, and former Tree Warden of West Springfield. Nominations are submitted by Massachusetts residents and municipal officials and are reviewed annually.

Marc Welch's career and character embody every aspect of the award's criteria. He has served the City of Newton with distinction for more than 24 years, beginning his tenure in June 2002 as Superintendent of Urban Forestry. He was appointed Deputy Commissioner of Parks, Recreation and Culture in December 2018 and, most recently, Acting Commissioner on

January 5, 2026. A Massachusetts Certified Arborist, Welch has also been a dedicated member of MTWFA for over two decades, serving as President from 2005–2006 and playing a pivotal role in shaping the organization's educational mission.

Colleagues and community members describe Welch as humble, calm, and endlessly patient—"a team member and a team leader" who is fair, accessible, and deeply respected. His ability to remain steady during crises, solve problems thoughtfully, and support staff has made him a trusted public servant and mentor. One colleague noted, "The community hit the lottery when they hired him."

Welch's commitment extends beyond his job description. He has been instrumental in implementing and managing MTWFA's flagship **Massachusetts Qualified Tree Warden Training Program**, which has qualified 245 students to date. He actively educates the public through seminars, workshops, guided park walks, and hands-on community plantings, while also volunteering with local tree organizations and supporting conservation efforts.

His devotion to people is matched only by his devotion to trees. Welch is known for advocating tirelessly for better equipment, safety training, and working conditions for his staff—often prioritizing their needs over his own. His office, famously shared with visiting squirrels who snack on his windowsill, reflects his genuine connection to nature and the urban forest he protects.

"Marc is the consummate professional," said one colleague. "His integrity, expertise, and unwavering commitment have made him an invaluable guardian of his city's natural resources."

The MTWFA is honored to recognize Marc Welch for a lifetime of service, leadership, and quiet excellence in urban forestry.

About MTWFA

The Massachusetts Tree Wardens' and Foresters' Association supports tree wardens and forestry professionals through education, advocacy, and collaboration to protect and enhance the Commonwealth's urban and community forests.